

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 12400 060904Z  
ACTION OC-06

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 ISO-00 /007 W  
-----029179 060908Z /10  
P 060805Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT PRIORITY  
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4029

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FRANKFURT FOR FRDCO; DEPT FOR OC/P

E.O. 11652 N/A  
TAGS: ACOU, ASEC  
SUBJECT: HEAVY COURIER LOADS AT ROME AIRPORT

REF: FRANKFURT 5298 (NOTAL)

1. BOTH 104 COURIER AND EMBASSY CONTACTS MET WITH  
SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING THE FOUR HEAVY POUCH  
CRATES (DEPT'S C-128 THRU C-131) MENTIONED REFTEL OUT  
OF ROME AIRPORT ON 7.4.78.

2. INITIALLY AIRPORT OFFICIALS REFUSED TO PLACE CRATES ON  
LUGGAGE CONVEYOR DUE TO THEIR WEIGHT AND SIZE. CONTACT ENTERED  
THE LUGGAGE DELIVERY AREA, ILLEGALLY, IN ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE AN  
ALTERNATIVE EXIT FOR COURIER AND MATERIAL. THERE FOLLOWED THREE  
HOURS OF ARGUMENTS, PLEADING, THREATS OF SEQUESTRATION AND  
GOING FROM ONE EXIT TO THE NEXT WITH TRACTOR AND CARTS, HOPING  
TO FIND A SYMPATHETIC GUARD OR OFFICIAL WHO WOULD LET COURIER,  
CONTACT AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, MATERIAL OUT OF AIRPORT. COURIER  
AND CONTACT WERE FINALLY ABLE TO "TALK" THEIR WAY OUT OF THE  
AIRPORT, RATHER SNEAKINGLY, THROUGH THE AIRLINE CREWS' EXIT.

3. THE MAJOR REASONS FOR THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED ARE WEIGHT  
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AND BULKINESS, INCORRECT PREPARATION FOR COURIER HANDLING AND  
ROME AIRPORT'S STRICT RULE AGAINST PLANESIDE EXCHANGES. THE  
FOUR CRATES ARRIVED ROME MINUS MOST SEALS AND TAGS. THE TAGS  
WERE NOT PUT THROUGH THE SEAL STRINGS BUT WERE STAPLED ON THE  
BURLAP COVER. THE LACK OF "DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE" IDENTI-  
FICATION ON THE CRATES RAISED SUSPICIONS IN THE OFFICIALS THAT  
THE MATERIAL WAS NOT PART OF A BONAFIDE COURIER SHIPMENT.

4. AN IDENTICAL PROBLEM WAS EXPERIENCED IN 1976 WHEN BOTH CONTACT AND COURIER WERE THREATENED WITH JUDICIAL ACTION BECUASE SOME OFFICIALS SUSPECTED SOME SMUGGLING ACTIVITY. AT THAT TIME EMBASSY REQUESTED EARLY NOTIFICATION OF HEAVY LOADS AND ASSURANCE THAT SUCH ITEMS BE PROPERLY AND COMPLETELY PREPARED FOR COURIER HANDLING.

5. EMBASSY MUST INSIST THAT BOTH OC/P AND FRDCO USE ARFOS SERVICE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WHEN HEAVY LOADS ARE SHIPPED TO ROME. ON SEVERAL OCCASSINS IT HAS BEEN NOTICED THAT SHIPMENTS INTENDED FOR ARFCOS HANDLING WERE AUTOMATICALLY GIVEN TO FRDCO TO HANDLE. ON EACH OCCASION A QUERY WITH END-USERS HAS SHOWN THAT NO DEADLINE WAS TO BE MET. THE SAME GOES FOR THIS TIME.

6. EMBASSY CONTACT HAS ENJOYED A GOOD WORKING RELATION WITH AIRPORT OFFICIALS BUT FLAPS SUCH AS THIS ONE MAKE HIM LOSE THAT PRESTIGE AND HE HAS TO START ALL OVER AGAIN IN CULTIVATING PEOPLE WHO MAY LOOK UPON HIM WITHOUT SUSPICION. YOUR COOPERATION IS APPRECIATED.GARDNER

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## Message Attributes

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**Concepts:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**TAGS:** ACOU, ASEC  
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